

AMENDED CLAIMS

[Received by the International Bureau on 06 January 2004 (06.01.04); original claims 1 and 35 amended; original claims 39, 39, 40 and 41 renumbered 39-42; remaining claims unchanged; (3 pages)]

CLAIMS

1. A coated foodstuff having a core and a hard coating comprising at least 90% crystalline erythritol by weight around the core characterised in that the coating is a solidified melt.
2. A foodstuff according to claim 1 wherein the coating comprises at least 95% crystalline erythritol by weight.
3. A foodstuff according to claim 1 wherein the coating further comprises up to 10% by weight of at least one further polyol, being mannitol, xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomaltulose or isomalt.
4. A foodstuff according to claim 2 wherein the coating further comprises up to 5% by weight of at least one further polyol, being mannitol, xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomaltulose or isomalt.
5. A foodstuff according to any preceding claim wherein the thickness of the coating is 1.0mm or less.
6. A foodstuff according to any preceding claim wherein the thickness of the coating is 0.5mm or less.
7. A foodstuff according to any preceding claim wherein the coating is 50% or less by weight of the foodstuff.
8. A foodstuff according to any preceding claim wherein the coating is 30% or less by weight of the foodstuff.
9. A foodstuff according to any preceding claim wherein the core is a fragile core.
10. A foodstuff according to any preceding claim wherein the core is a soft fondant.

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11. A foodstuff according to any preceding claim wherein the core comprises a polyol.
12. A foodstuff according to any preceding claim wherein the core comprises erythritol or xylitol.
- 5 13. A foodstuff according to any preceding claim wherein the core contains between 75% and 85% erythritol or xylitol by weight, between 10% and 20% fat by weight and between 2% and 10% polyol syrup by weight.
- 10 14. A confectionery product according to any preceding claim.
- 15 15. A method of manufacturing a coated foodstuff having a core and a hard coating around the core comprising:
 - (a) forming a core;
 - (b) melting a coating material comprising at least 90% erythritol by weight;
 - (c) applying the molten coating material around the core; and
 - (d) solidifying the molten coating material to form a crystalline coating around the core.
- 20 16. A method according to claim 15 wherein step (c) comprises dipping the core in the molten coating material.
17. A method according to claim 15 wherein step (c) comprises spraying the molten coating material onto the core.
- 25 18. A method according to claim 15, 16 or 17 wherein step (b) comprises melting a coating material comprising at least 90% erythritol by weight and up to 10% by weight of at least one further polyol, being mannitol, xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomaltulose or isomalt.

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19. A method according to claim 15, 16 or 17 wherein step (b) comprises melting a coating material comprising at least 95% erythritol by weight.

20. A method according to claim 19 wherein step (b) 5 comprises melting a coating material comprising at least 95% erythritol by weight and up to 5% by weight of at least one further polyol, being mannitol, xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomaltulose or isomalt.

21. A method of manufacturing a coated foodstuff having a 10 fragile core and a hard coating around the core comprising:

- (a) forming a fragile core;
- (b) melting a coating material consisting substantially of one or more polyols;
- (c) applying the molten coating material around the 15 fragile core; and
- (d) solidifying the molten coating material to form a crystalline coating around the fragile core.

22. A method according to claim 21 wherein step (c) 20 comprises dipping the fragile core in the molten coating material.

23. A method according to claim 21 wherein step (c) comprises spraying the molten coating material onto the fragile core.

24. A method according to claim 21, 22 or 23 wherein step 25 (b) comprises melting a coating material comprising at least 90% erythritol or mannitol by weight.

25. A method according to any of claims 21 to 24 wherein step (b) comprises melting a coating material comprising at least 95% erythritol or mannitol by weight.

26. A method according to claim 24 wherein step (b) comprises melting a coating material comprising at least 90% erythritol or mannitol by weight and up to 10% by weight of at least one further polyol, being mannitol, erythritol, xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomaltulose or isomalt.

27. A method according to claim 25 wherein step (b) comprises melting a coating material comprising at least 95% erythritol or mannitol by weight and up to 5% by weight of at least one further polyol, being mannitol, erythritol, xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomaltulose or isomalt.

28. A method according to any of claims 20 to 27 of manufacturing a coated foodstuff having a fragile core comprising a polyol wherein step (a) comprises forming a fragile core comprising a polyol.

29. A method according to claim 28 of manufacturing a coated foodstuff having a fragile core comprising erythritol or xylitol wherein step (a) comprises forming a fragile core comprising erythritol or xylitol.

30. A method according to any of claims 21 to 29 of manufacturing a coated soft fondant, marshmallow or expanded or aerated confectionery product comprising:

- (a) forming a soft fondant, marshmallow or expanded or aerated confectionery product;
- (b) melting a coating material comprising a polyol;
- (c) applying the molten coating material around the soft fondant, marshmallow or expanded or aerated confectionery product; and
- (d) solidifying the molten coating material to form a crystalline coating around the soft fondant, marshmallow or expanded or aerated confectionery product.

31. A method according to claim 30 of manufacturing a coated soft fondant wherein step (a) comprises forming a soft fondant comprising between 75% and 85% erythritol or xylitol by weight, between 10% and 20% fat by weight and between 2% and 10% polyol syrup by weight.

32. A method according to any of claims 21 to 31 further comprising applying a further coating material to the coated core formed in step (d).

33. A method according to claim 32 comprising applying a sugar syrup to the coated core formed in step (d).

34. A coated foodstuff having a fragile core and a hard coating consisting substantially of one or more crystalline polyols around the core characterised in that the coating is a solidified melt.

35. A coated foodstuff according to claim 34 wherein the core is a soft, fondant, marshmallow or expanded or aerated confectionery product.

36. A coated foodstuff according to claim 34 or 35 wherein the coating comprises at least 90% crystalline erythritol or mannitol by weight.

37. A coated foodstuff according to claim 34, 35 or 36 wherein the coating comprises at least 95% crystalline erythritol or mannitol by weight.

38. A coated foodstuff according to claim 36 wherein the coating further comprises up to 10% by weight of a second polyol, being mannitol, erythritol, xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomaltulose or isomalt.

39. A coated foodstuff according to claim 37 wherein the coating further comprises up to 5% by weight of a second

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polyol, being mannitol, erythritol, xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomaltulose or isomalt.

40. A coated foodstuff substantially as described with reference to the examples.

41. A method of manufacturing a coated foodstuff substantially as described with reference to the examples.

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